

April 25, 2007



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Mr. ALTMIRE. The Iraq Study Group recommended that we do set a timeline on our activities to increase our leverage with the Iraqi Government, as I talked about earlier. But the President chose to discard that. He chose to discard what his generals on the ground said. Those that disagreed were reassigned, and some of them now, as Mr. Hodes has pointed out, are saying that what we are doing is the right course of action. But what is most important and what is most relevant for what we did today in this House, the President is ignoring the American people.

We have all seen the polls about where the American public feels about this. But we shouldn't legislate by polls; we should legislate based on we are elected Representatives of the American people. There are 435 districts in this House, each of whom has a voice, and it is our responsibility as Representatives to go back into our districts, listen to what our constituents have to say on these issues of critical importance, return here on a day like today, debate the issue the entire day, come back at 11 o'clock at night and we are still debating the issue. But we took a vote and we had to put it on the line, yes or no, where do you come down on this issue? The Congress has spoken. At least the House has spoken. The Senate is going to speak in the next day or two.

And I want to make one thing clear. Let there be there be no discussion about this. If the Senate passes the conference report, which we expect, and sends this bill to the President, as Mr. Hodes said, he has a decision to make. He can either sign that bill and provide the troops the funding that they need to continue the mission, or veto the bill and deny them the support that they need. That is his choice. The Congress has spoken on that.

So when any Member of this House has one of their constituents come up to them and say, well, when are you going to give our troops the money that they need to continue this fight? Well, we did it today. The answer to that question is we did it today. The Senate is going to do it tomorrow, perhaps the following day.

Then the President has a decision to make. And if he chooses to veto that bill, the troops' funding will be delayed. But that won't be because of us. That will be because of a decision that was made down the street at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.